

M. J.

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A
LETTER to J. O.

Loving FRIEND,

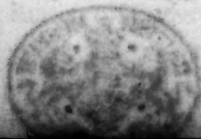
I Received thy *Latin* Epistle, which thou wert pleas'd to write me upon my sending thee the *British Journals*, containing the Bishop of *Cambray's* Sentiments of Religion, and design'd to have answer'd it presently, but Business at that Time diverted my Thoughts, and tho' I sometimes intended it afterwards, yet I could not find a Disposition, and Leisure enough to write till now.

I was glad to find the Papers met with thy good Liking, and it has given me no small Satisfaction to find that divers Persons of different Persuasions in Religion, and some of considerable Rank and Abilities, have likewise signify'd their Approbation of them: From hence I infer, that the Author's Sentiments are well grounded, and that the Essential Duties of Religion, are to be found in the *Heart of every one, that will but attend thereto*, which is the main Principle we profess.

I design'd to have given the Publick some more of the Bishop of *Cambray's* Thoughts, with an Account of his Life, and particularly of his Sufferings, for maintaining his Religious Sentiments, in Opposition to the Old Bishop of *Meaux*, and the present Bishop of *Paris*, Cardinal *de Noailles*, for which he lost his Preferments in the Court of *France*, and was put out from being Tutor to the Duke of *Burgundy*, the present King's Father.

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THE



THE Occasion of this, as I find it related by himself, was, his letting the Bishop of *Meaux* have some Manuscripts to peruse, that were written by a Lady on Matters of Religion. This he did upon the Bishop of *Meaux*'s own Request, not in the least suspecting he would have made such a Use of them, as without his Knowledge or Consent, to expose certain Passages therein to the Publick, with false Glosses and Inferences of his own. This so provok'd the Bishop of *Cambray*, that he immediately writ an Answer to it, in Justification of the Lady and her Writings, upon which a hot Dispute arose, that ended not but in the Banishment of this Good Man, and the Imprisonment of the Lady.

I will give thee some Account of this Lady and her Writings, by which thou may'st gather why she and the Bishop were so persecuted. Her Name was *Guion*, she dy'd about Ten Years ago, in the Seventieth Year of her Age. She had a Religious Education, and was in her tender Years particularly affected with Divine Things: When she read, or heard tell of the Great Sufferings of the Saints and Martyrs, she would wish her self to be such a one. But when she grew more towards a Woman, the Weaknesses and Follies of Youth, particularly Pride and Vanity had great Prevalence upon her, tho' she often felt secret Rebukes in her Mind, which were sometimes so strong, as to make her bitterly bewail her Failings and Transgressions. She had one While a very great Desire to have devoted herself entirely to a Religious Life, but her Father married her at about Sixteen Years Old to a Wealthy Gentleman, by whom she had several Children.

THE Married State to her was attended with great Crosses, but these rather promoted than slacken'd her Zeal for God and Religion. She often found her Heart warm'd with the Love of God, and great Longings were in her Soul for a closer Communion with him. When her Mind was uneasy and troubled, she would make her Condition known to her *Directors and Confessors*, but they, (as she writes in her Life) were altogether Strangers to the Way into which God was leading her; for instead of directing her to *Him* who sometimes smote her Heart with his gentle Corrections, and at other Times enamour'd her with His Beauty, they set her about saying of Prayers, and repeating daily the Office, as 'tis call'd,
of



of the *Blessed Virgin*. But all this did nothing for her, this heal'd not her Wound which was inward, nor did it give Ease to her Mind, which could not rest till she had found the *Beloved of her Soul*.

A T length the Lord, who knew the Sincerity of her Desires, and heard her secret Groans, was pleas'd to send her a sudden Relief, by Means of a Religious Person, who was just come from a long Retirement, and in his Journey lodg'd at her Father's House; he knowing the Religious Concern his Daughter was under, sent for her, and advis'd her to tell her Condition to this Religious Man, which when she had done, signifying the Difficulties she had to Pray, He reply'd thus, * *Madam, 'tis because you seek without what you have within: Seek G O D in your own Heart, and there you will find him.* These few Words, she says, were all he said to her at that Time, but they were as an Arrow shot through her Heart, and also as precious Balm that asswaged her Grief, and heal'd her Wounds: They help'd her to discover in her own Heart, what she had sought for many Years, but came not to the Enjoyment thereof, for want of knowing it. " O my God, says she, Thou wert in my Heart, and requiredst only the turning in of my Mind, to make me feel thy Presence! O Infinite Goodness thou wert so near me, and I ran hither and thither to find thee, but found thee not. My Life was a Burthen, and my Happiness was within me. I was poor in the midst of Riches, and starving with Hunger, near a Table fill'd with the Daintiest of Foods. O thou Beauty, Ancient and New, why did I know thee so late! Alas, I sought thee where thou wast not, and did not seek thee where thou wast. It was because I understood not these Words of thy Gospel, *Luke xvii. 20. The Kingdom of God cometh not with Observation, Neither shall they say, Lo here, or lo there: For behold the Kingdom of God is within you.* This I now experienced, for thou becamest my King, and my Heart was thy Kingdom, wherein thou reign'dst as a Sovereign, and didst whatsoever thou wert pleas'd to have done.

THIS

* C'est Madame, que vous cherchez au dehors ce que vous avez au dedans. Accoutumez vous à chercher Dieu dans votre Coeur & vous l'y trouverez.

THIS effectual Reach of God's Love to her Soul, was in the 20th Year of her Age: After this she became settled, and rightly grounded in Religion, and was made an Instrument for the turning of the Minds of many inward to God and for this she labour'd, and was zealously concern'd, as the following Passages in a little Book of hers (call'd † *A short and most easy Way of Prayer*) do abundantly shew.

“ O what a Reformation! What great and lasting Con-
 “ versions should we see amongst the People, if the Priests
 “ and Curates, instead of putting them upon abundance of
 “ outward Performances, would direct them to *Silent Prayer*,
 “ and the *Inward Life*, and labour to have their Hearts gain'd,
 “ and wrought upon by CHRIST JESUS. If the Country
 “ Curates had Zeal thus to instruct their Parishioners, the
 “ very Shepherds in tending their Flocks, might have the
 “ Spirit of the Ancient Anchorites. The Plowmen in follow-
 “ ing their Plough, might have a Blessed Communion with
 “ God. Tradesmen, and poor Labourers, who spend them-
 “ selves with Toil, might gather hence Everlasting Fruit.
 “ Wickedness would then be soon banish'd, and the whole
 “ Parish become Spiritual. Ah, when the *Heart* is once
 “ gain'd, all other Things are of Course easily amended.
 “ Wherefore GOD principally asketh for the *Heart*.

“ BY this Way a Multitude of Evils, such as Drunkenness,
 “ Swearing, Whoredom, &c. which too much abound,
 “ would be clean rooted out. CHRIST would reign over
 “ all, and the Face of the Church would be renew'd in eve-
 “ ry Place. Oh, the inexpressible Losses that come from a
 “ Neglect of this inward Way! Oh, what account have those
 “ Persons to give to God, who take upon them the Care of
 “ Souls, for not having discover'd this *Hidden Treasure* to all
 “ those unto whom they Minister the W O R D.

SOME excuse themselves, by saying there is Danger in this
 Way, and that simple and illiterate People are incapable of Spi-
 ritual Things. “ But the Oracle of TRUTH assures us
 “ the contrary, saying, *The Lord loveth the Simple*. But
 “ what Danger can there be in walking in the Only Way,
 “ which

† Moyen court & très-facile de faire Oraison.

“ which is JESUS CHRIST; in giving our selves up wholly to
 “ Him; in continually eying of Him; in putting all our
 “ Confidence in His Grace, and in pressing after His Love
 “ with all our Might?

“ BUT so far is it from being true, That simple and
 “ illiterate People are incapable of Spiritual Things, that they
 “ are more fit to attain them; for they are more Docil and
 “ more Humble and Innocent, and as they reason but little,
 “ they are not so strongly wedded to their own Understan-
 “ ding. And besides, being destitute of Learning, they suffer
 “ themselves to be led more easily by the Spirit of God,
 “ whereas others through a strong Opinion of their own Suf-
 “ ficiency are clog’d and darkned, and resist the Divine Inspi-
 “ rations much more. God has also declared that he will give
 “ his little Ones the Understanding of his Law. *Psa. cxix. 130.*
 “ He assures us too, that he loves to converse familiarly with
 “ the Simple. *The Lord preserveth the Simple: I was brought*
 “ *low and he helped me. Psal. cxvi. 6.* Let the Spiritual Fa-
 “ thers take Care they hinder not little Children from co-
 “ ming to Christ, *Suffer, [said he to his Apostles] little Chil-*
 “ *dren, and forbid them not to come unto me: for of such is the*
 “ *Kingdom of Heaven. Mat. xix. 14.* JESUS CHRIST had
 “ not said this to his Apostles, but that they would have hin-
 “ dred the Children from coming to him.

“ THE Remedy is often apply’d outwardly when the
 “ Distemper is in the Heart. This is the Cause why so little
 “ Reformation is made among the People. Let them be
 “ taught to seek God in their own Hearts, to think upon
 “ him, and when the Mind is gone astray, to return there a-
 “ gain, and to do and suffer all Things with a View to please
 “ him: This would be directing them to the Source of all
 “ Virtues, and would help them to find whatsoever is neces-
 “ sary for their Sanctification. Ye are therefore most earnestly
 “ entreated, O all you Ministers, to bring Souls straitways
 “ into this Way which is CHRIST, and ’tis he who entreats
 “ you by the Blood he has shed for them: *Speak ye to the*
 “ *Heart of Jerusalem.* Let him reign over Hearts; for as it
 “ is the Heart only that can oppose it self to his Reign, so ’tis
 “ by the Subjection of the Heart, that most Honour is given

“ to his Government. Let God have the Glory and he will
 “ be your Sanctification.

“ TEACH your People the Prayer of the Heart and not of
 “ the Head: The Prayer of the Spirit of God and not of
 “ Man's Invention. Alas, Men will be making studied
 “ Prayers, and by adjusting them too much, they make them
 “ of no Use. They have driven the Children from the best
 “ of FATHERS, in forcing them to learn a Language too
 “ much refin'd. Go poor Children, speak to your HEAVENLY
 “ FATHER in your natural Language, how stammering, brok-
 “ en and mean so ever it be, it will not be so to him. A Fa-
 “ ther loves a Petition, which Love and Fear may put in
 “ Disorder, because it proceeds from the Heart, much better
 “ than a dry and barren Discourse tho' well worded. O how
 “ some few Glances of Love affect him! They express abun-
 “ dantly more than fine Arguments and Elocution. The
 “ Spirit of God needs not our Regulations, whenever he
 “ pleases he takes Shepherds and makes them Prophets: And
 “ so far is he from shutting the House of Prayer against any,
 “ that he leaves the Gates open to all, and Wisdom is bid to
 “ cry in Publick Places, Whoso is Simple let him come unto
 “ me: and to those who are without Understanding she says,
 “ Come ye, eat of the Bread which I give you, and drink
 “ of the Wine which I have mingled. And does not JESUS
 “ CHRIST thank his FATHER, that he hath hidden his Secrets
 “ from the Wise and reveals them to Babes.

T H U S this Lady argues for the Necessity of every ones
 Mind being turn'd inwardly to CHRIST: Arguments not so
 much drawn from the Head, as flowing from the Experience
 of God's Love in her own Heart; And now in a most cogent,
 and if I may so say, in a most Philosophical Manner, she pro-
 ceeds to answer some Objections made to this inward Way of
 Silence and quiet Waiting for the Directions of God's Spirit.

“ None can be ignorant that the Sovereign Good is God, and
 “ that our essential Happiness consists in our Union with God:
 “ That holy Men are more or less so as the Union is more or
 “ less perfect. That this Union is not to be acquir'd by Man's
 “ own Actings, since God communicates himself to the Soul
 “ but in Proportion to the Greatness, Nobleness and Exten-
 “ siveness of its Passivity. No one can be united to God with-
 “ out

“ out Passiveness and Simplicity. This Union therefore be-
 “ ing Happiness it self, the Way that leads to this Passiveness
 “ cannot be bad, but must be the best Way, and there can
 “ be no Danger in following it. This Way is not dangerous,
 “ for if it were, would JESUS CHRIST have recommended it
 “ as the most perfect and necessary of all Ways? All Persons
 “ may walk herein, and as all are called to Happiness, all are
 “ call’d to enjoy God in this Life and the next, for the Enjoy-
 “ ment of God makes our Happiness: I say the Enjoyment
 “ of God himself, and not his Gifts, which can never make
 “ our essential Happiness, as not being able to satisfy the
 “ Soul fully. For the Soul is so Noble and Great, that all the
 “ most excellent Gifts of God could not make her happy, if
 “ God did not give himself to her. But God’s Desire is to give
 “ himself to the Creature according to the Capacity he has
 “ given it. Need any one therefore fear to give up himself to
 “ God! Need any be afraid of possessing him, and of
 “ disposing themselves for the Divine Union!

“ B U T some say we must not put our selves into this
 “ Way; I agree to it, and farther say, that no Creature in
 “ the whole Earth can do it of himself, by all its Efforts:
 “ It must be God that must unite himself to the Creature. If
 “ therefore we cannot unite our selves to God of our selves,
 “ ’tis a needless Objection to say we must not put our selves
 “ into this Way.

“ O T H E R S give out that we only pretend and ima-
 “ gine our selves to be in the Enjoyment of God. But I an-
 “ swer this cannot be Pretence or Imagination, for he that
 “ is just dying with Hunger cannot imagine himself to be full
 “ and satisfied, especially for any long Time, for there will
 “ be Desires and Longings, and he will quickly discover he
 “ enjoys not his Fill. Since therefore no one can of himself
 “ enter into this Happiness, and since no Man can bring it
 “ to another, we do not pretend to bring any Person to it, but
 “ to show them the Way that leads to it, and to entreat them
 “ that they would not suffer themselves to be detain’d, and ta-
 “ ken up in Inns or external Performances, which must be quit-
 “ ted when the Signal is given: This an experienced Director
 “ knows, who shows the living Water, and endeavours to bring
 “ People to it. And would it not be a most barbarous Cruelty,
 “ to show a Spring of Water to a thirsty Man and then to
 “ bind

“ bind him, and hinder him from coming at it, and let him die with Thirst. But this is what is done now a-days.

“ A R E we then agree'd about the Way, and the End thereof, of which there is not the least Room to doubt. The Way has its Beginning, Progression and End. The more any proceed towards the End, the more they necessarily leave the Beginning, and 'twill be impossible to arrive at the End, but by proceeding more and more from the Beginning, for we cannot pass from one Door through another without passing betwixt them, this is not to be disputed: If then the End be good, holy and necessary, why should the Way that comes from the Door and leads straight to this End be bad? O the Darkness of Men, who would be thought learned and wise! O! how true is it my God, that thou hast hid thy Secrets from the Wise and Prudent, and hast reveal'd them to Babes.

B Y this Time, my Friend, I believe thou cease'st to wonder why so great a Storm of Persecution was rais'd against this Lady, who could not by all the Stratagems of her Adversaries, be brought to renounce or condemn what she had written as Erroneous, which they would have had her to have done. How corresponding is her Doctrine to the Times of the Gospel, in which the Lord promis'd he would pour out of his Spirit upon all Flesh, upon Sons and Daughters, Servants and Hand-maids! How conformable to the Words of CHRIST, *John vi. 44, 45. No Man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him ——— It is written in the Prophets they shall all be taught of God, every Man therefore that hath hear'd, and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me.*

H O W agreeable to the Experience of holy Men in all Ages, who have declared, that no Union or Communion with God could be known, till Man came to see his own Weakness and Insufficiency, and had humbled himself before his Maker, and became as Clay in the Hands of the Potter.

H A D therefore this Lady's Doctrine prevail'd, there would have been no Need of Directors and Confessors. Kneeling to Images and the Crucifix would have ceas'd with many other outward Performances. Nay, there would have been no Prayers to Saints nor to the Virgin Mary, and the Roman Breviary or Mass-Book would have been laid aside. No wonder

then

then that the Upholders of Superstition, and the *Pope's Hierarchy* were alarm'd, when they found this Lady's Doctrine begin to spread, and so great a Man as the *Arch-Bishop of Cambray* recommending and promoting it, It was high Time for them to cry out *Enthusiasm, Heresy*, and what not, and when they saw that would not do, to call for Prisons and Banishments, and such Treatment is what the Publishers of the pure Evangelical Doctrine of CHRIST have too often met with, from those who have assum'd CHRIST's Seat, and claim'd the Direction of the Conscience.

'TIS very affecting to read with what Patience and Resignation this Lady bore her Sufferings. In a Letter to a certain Person before she went to Prison, she express'd her self thus. " As I have resign'd my self up to God, I am under
" no Concern for what they will do with me. I neither fear
" a Prison nor Death. The Infamy they have cast upon me
" would be a much greater Pain, if I took Part with my self.
" But fear not, if they should put me to Death do you come
" and see me die, and do as *Mary Magdalen* did, who never
" left him that had taught her the Science of pure Love.

SHE compos'd many spiritual Hymns and divine Poems, for which she had an extraordinary Talent. These express the Serenity of her Mind, and how abundantly she partook of God's Love and living Presence in her Confinement. Some of them are written in a Prophetick Strain, intimating that tho' *France* had rejected the Tender of God's *Pure Love* through her his weak Instrument, yet other Countries far distant, should come to the Knowledge of it, and suffer themselves to be influenced and directed thereby.

O what Reason have we of this Nation to be thankful, and to prize the Mercies and Favours of God to us. Here every one may sit as under his own Vine and Fig-Tree, and there are none to make afraid; And what Obligations have we as a People to prize the Priviledges we enjoy? We can now meet together and wait quietly without Molestation, for the divine Influences of the *Holy Spirit*, and Liberty is given to all to speak and declare what, in the Fear of God, any may have to say for his Glory and their Neighbour's Good. How greatly would such a Privilege have been priz'd by this Lady and her

Friends in France. Many Reflections now seem to croud upon me, but Time is too short, and I must bid thee Farewel, who am

London the 22d. of the
3d. Month, 1727.

Thy Sincere Friend

J. M.

POSTSCRIPT.

THERE is a very remarkable Passage in this Lady's Life; which she has plac'd after the Account she gives of her Confessor's putting her upon saying over daily the Office of the Virgin Mary, which she says was a great Hindrance to her Spiritual Progress, but it having some Reference to a Dispute that was among the Learned Doctors &c. at Paris, about the Love of God and the true Motives thereto. I chose to put it here, and to give a short Hint of that Dispute.

THE Bishop of Meaux and those of his Side would have it, That the Promises of God, and the Rewards of Heaven, were the ~~true~~ ^{right} Motives of our Love to God. The Bishop of Cambray and his Adherents said, That as God was in himself infinitely lovely, a Sight and Sense of his Perfections were the only ~~true~~ ^{right} Motives of our Love to him. Now follows the Passage, "O my God, if one did but know the Value of Silent Prayer, and the Advantage which the Soul receives in conversing with thee, and of what Consequence it is to Salvation, every one wou'd be assiduous therein. It is a strong Tower into which the Enemy could never enter. He might indeed attack and besiege it, and make a great Noise about its Walls; but if we were faithful and kept our Standing within, he could never hurt us."

CHILDREN

* **CHILDREN** should be taught the Necessity of silent
 " Prayer, as much as they are taught the Necessity of their Sal-
 " vation. But alas! they are told there is a *Heaven* and a *Hell*,
 " and that they must endeavour to escape the one and gain the
 " other, but are not taught the easiest and shortest Way to
 " come at it. Silent Prayer is no other than the Ladder to
 " *Heaven*, and the Ladder to *Heaven* is silent-Prayer. 'Tis
 " a Prayer which every one is capable of; not made up with
 " Arguments, nor a Work of the Head, or the Fruit of Study,
 " which only fills the Mind with empty Things, and seldom
 " settles it, or but for a few Moments; nor does it warm the
 " Heart which still remains cold and languishing. O poor
 " People, tho' of low and very mean Capacities, Children
 " with small Reason and Knowledge, weak Minds that can
 " retain little, come ye to this silent-Prayer and you will be-
 " come Learned. O ye Great, Wise and Rich, have you
 " not all [great as you are] a Heart capable of loving what
 " is fit for you, and of hating the contrary? Love, O love ye
 " the Sovereign God and hate the Sovereign Evil, and you
 " shall be very learned. When you love any one, do you know
 " the Reasons of your Love and its Definitions? No assuredly,
 " you love because your Heart is made to love what it finds
 " lovely. Is there any Thing more lovely than God? You know
 " very well that he is lovely, don't say then that you do not
 " know him. You know he has made you, and that he dy'd
 " for you. But if these Reasons are not sufficient, tell me,
 " which of you is not sometimes in Need of something, or has
 " not some Evil or Disgrace befallen him? Which of you
 " knows not how to express his Grief and to ask for the Re-
 " medy of it? Come then to this Source of all Good, and
 " without troubling your selves to make your Complaint to
 " weak and feeble Creatures who cannot ease you, come to
 " silent-Prayer, and spread your Grievs before God, ask his
 " Favour, and above all love him. No one can exempt him-
 " self from loving: No one can live without an Heart, nor the
 " Heart without Love. Why then do ye amuse your selves
 " about the Reasons of loving Love it self? Let us love and
 " not reason about Love, and we shall find our selves fill'd
 " with Love, before others shall have learn'd the Reasons
 " which cause us to love. Taste and ye shall see *Psal.* xxxiv. 8.

" Taste

"Taste of Love and you shall be more learned in Love than
 "the greatest Philosophers. In Love as in all other Things
 "Experience instructs better than reasoning. Come and
 "drink at this Fountain of Life, instead of hewing to your
 "selves broken Cisterns of the Creature, which far from af-
 "swaging, will but augment your Thirst. SO had you but
 "drank of this Fountain you would not go any where else to
 "drink; for you would have no more Thirst for the Things
 "of this World, provided you always continued to draw at
 "this Fountain. But if you leave it, alas the Enemy gets the
 "Upperhand, and he will give you poison'd Waters which,
 "tho' seemingly pleasant to the Taste, will deprive you of
 "Life.

† "O admirable Science which is learnt in Stilness, in the
 "unexpressible and ever eloquent Silence of the Divinity!
 "The Word of God speaks without ceasing in this Soul; and
 "teaches it in such a Manner as shames the most learned
 "Doctors!

N. B. *Tho' the Word Silent-Prayer is not a Scripture Term,
 yet I think the same Thing is imply'd in the Words of Christ, Luke
 xxi. 36. Watch ye therefore and pray always.*

† O admirable Science, que celle qui s'enseigne à petit bruit, dans le Silence in-
 effable & toujours eloquent de la Divinité! Le Verbe parle incessamment en cette
 Ame & l'enseigne d'une manière à faire honte aux plus grands Docteurs.

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